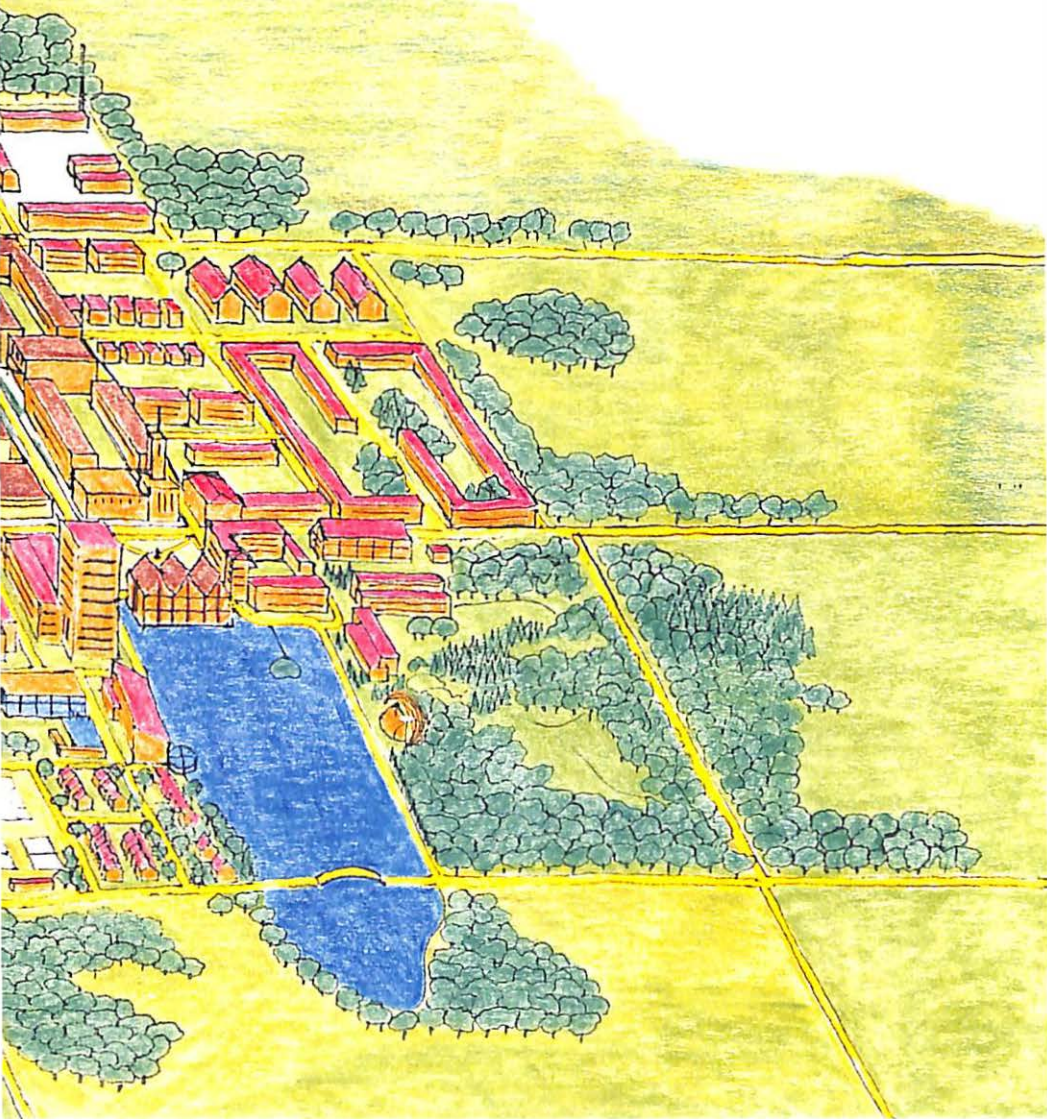


alpha

prototype community
of project alphistia



Introduction

Alphistia is an idea, not a place, at least at the moment. The essential idea of Alphistia is to make it a real place, where people can live together according to their own beliefs, speak their own language, and create their own culture.

Project Alphistia is an organization set up to make it possible for Alphistia to be established. Its current activities involve planning the settlement of an interim community, called Alpha village, which would bring together likeminded people who want to live together until the founding of the *lesenum*, an Alphistian word meaning: “a land of our own”.

Project Alphistia would also continue the development of the Alphistian language, and provide learning materials and courses for those wishing to know the language. The Project would also sponsor research on topics such as nation-building, cultural development, and the acquisition of land for the *lesenum*.

As an interim community, Alpha village would work as a model for the future *lesenum*. Ideas about city planning, social housing, adult education, co-operative economics, and political ideas could be tried out. People could visit this prototype community to learn more about Project Alphistia’s plans for the future.

With luck, land could be found or created so that the *lesenum* could be established. Alphistia would be a representative democracy, with a lively political scene representing many points of view. It would develop a social-market economy, with prosperity and the “good life” for all, without extremes of poverty or wealth. Niche markets would be sought out globally that the Alphistian workforce could exploit profitably. And Alphistia would offer a rich cultural life, in its own language, while be welcoming and open to world culture. A tolerant and multicultural way of life for those who wish to live in the Alphistian context.

These are the goals of Project Alphistia: a society of free citizens living together according to the principles of community, humanism, and caring. (In Alphistian, known as: *komunitas, humanitas, karetas*.)

The Republic of Me

When I was a boy, I created a virtual country. That was in 1967. I called it Alpha the first few years and Alphistia from about 1970. As time has passed, Alphistia has become my homeland more and more.

It is still a virtual country, but I would like to share my ideas and ideals for what the future could be. First, there is the possibility for an interim community of likeminded people. I call this the Alpha village. At a later time would be the creation of a territorial Alphistia, which I call the lesenum. Lesenum is the Alphistian word for native land.

Project Alphistia would be the organization to guide the development of both the village and the lesenum. The timetable for each would be openended. The time will come when those who would join the project could live together according to their own beliefs, speak their own language, and have a land of their own: Alphistia.

"You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope some day you'll join me..."

Of course, John Lennon's song is about imagining one world, without countries, with universal love and understanding. A laudable goal, but far beyond what I can imagine. First of all, being a citizen of a country is not a bad thing in and of itself. Not every nation is jingoistic or chauvinistic. I believe that as the world becomes more "globalized", there will be many who want to develop their own uniqueness and identity, and they may wish to live together. Imagining a world where everyone speaks English and watches only the latest Hollywood blockbuster is certainly not an ideal future. Technology, economic development and an interconnected world do not necessarily preclude the survival of local cultures all over the world. There's a place for low brow culture of the American variety, but that place shouldn't be EVERY place.

Alpha and Alphistia can serve as alternatives, and Project Alphistia could encourage the development of similar projects all over the world. Some nations are overly large. The former Soviet Union is now more than 15 different countries. This occurred more or less peacefully, although it had its price. And although the European Union brings its members ever closer, its goal is not to see the end of individual countries. Eventually, some of the member states might break up into smaller nations, for the good of all involved. Even in a global culture, there should be a place for diversity. With a little imagination, and

probably a lot of luck, a place like the Alpha village could exist. And with time, perhaps the lesenum of Alphistia could come into being.

"A map of the world without Utopia on it isn't even worth looking at."

Oscar Wilde said that. Perhaps Project Alphistia will always remain just the ideas of myself and a few other people. Such a virtual country could serve as a role model. My ideas about a new country are far from utopian, but even a place on the shelf with all the other utopias would be an honorable spot.

This small book describes the first phase of Project Alphistia, the creation of a small town. It would serve as a prototype community for a future territorial Alphistia. A short description of the lesenum is also included, although more information about this subject can be found in "The Land of Alphistia."

Prototype Community

Alpha Village would be an interim community for Project Alphistia members to be able to live together until the creation of the lesenum.

Alpha Village could be established almost anywhere, including the USA. It would not develop its own legal system or autarkic economic system, although it would live according to its own political and social norms and establish its own economic enterprises. It would be separate from the larger community, but neither hostile to, or excluded from it. Still, Alpha Village would be very different from contemporary ways of living. Its land needs would be very small, since it would be car-free and pedestrian oriented, and would have a permanent population of several hundred living in low-rise, but high density housing. The inhabitants would use the Alphistian language for everyday use, have their own cultural life, and work primarily in their own companies and organizations.

The models for Alpha village would include many of the intentional communities in history and our own time. Experimental communities currently in existence, such as Auroville in India, Arcosanti in the USA, Orania in South Africa the kibbutzim of Israel, and historical examples such as New Harmony, Indiana, the early Mormon experiences in Nauvoo Illinois and in Utah, or the Amana communes in Iowa. Each of these attempts share a unique status as alternatives to the way of life of the larger society. Their goals and policies certainly vary widely, from the spiritual aspirations of Auroville or Amana, to the clearly secular ideas of Arcosanti and New Harmony. An example such as Orania in Africa is controversial because of its goal to create a new apartheid-based country. The Alpha village and Project Alphistia are part of this genre of society-building, while having their own goals and ideology, based on democratic and humanistic values.

The Alpha village would serve several functions as an interim community. It would be the headquarters of Project Alphistia, and the staff of this organization would work and live in the settlement. This would also be the same for the workers in the Alpha Co-ops, profit-making co-operatives producing a variety of goods. The teachers of the Alpha School would also live there.

Not everyone interested in Project Alphistia could live in the Alpha village. Probably only a small percentage would. There would be facilities for short term visitors too: weekender cottages and flats, dormitories for students, hostels and hotels for tourists. There might be as many temporary residents at the village on any given day as there would be permanent residents.

Residents and visitors could see aspects of everyday life as planned for the lesenum: a pleasant town with pedestrian friendly streets, lively neighborhoods, and rich opportunities for culture and leisure. Workshops would be near homes without being a nuisance, the shopping district would be convenient to the neighborhoods, and have permanent residents too. Trees and grass would be of great importance, and the absence of cars would make travel around the town safe and pollution free. The overall atmosphere of the Alpha village would be somewhat similar to the kibbutz/moshav model so common in Israel, combined with the cultural and educational opportunities of a small college town.

The next section of this book describes a prototype Alpha village, with a map and guide to the major buildings.

Alpha Village Description

Visitors to the Alpha village would arrive at the Welcome Center after a short train ride from the parking area at the entrance of the community, about 500 meters to the northwest. The railway would be an electrified light rail line, prototype for the future Alphistian railway network. Alpha village itself would be a car free zone, except for a small number of electric vehicles used to transport people and goods. The village would be ideal for walking and bicycle use.

The Welcome Center would have an information office for visitors, as well as a reservation desk for accommodations, tours, courses, and events. Adjacent to the Welcome Center would be a hotel, with a terraced cafe/restaurant. Just to the north of the railway line would be the campground.

The main street of Alpha village, called Pravikense Prospekt, would run south from the Welcome Center. This would be the town's shopping district. The east side of the street would have several apartment buildings, containing weekender flats. On the ground floor would be several shops: a bookstore, galley, souvenir shop, ice cream cafe, and a furniture store. The village cinema would be located here as well. The West side of the street would have the office building of the Alpha Co-Ops, with co-op stores on the ground floor. At the south end of the block would be the Ko-Op department store, with a big supermarket and rooftop cafeteria.

Pravikense Prospekt would cross Alvesteane Prospekt, the main east-west street. Alpha Plan would be at this intersection, the main square of the town. At the north end of the square would be the Alpha Center. This would be the headquarters of Project Alphistia, and would also serve as town hall for Alpha village. The east side of the square would be a hotel. On the south side would be the Aula, a large assembly hall. This building would seat several hundred people for meetings, conferences, and cultural events. The Aula would face the north end of the town lake. The Alpha Institute would face the west side of the square.

The east end of Alvesteane Prospekt would have several apartment houses and the village medical clinic. The west end of the street would have the campus of the Alpha Schools, with a sports center nearby.

Opposite the main building of the schools would be the cultural center, consisting of a theater, library, music and art studios, and a sculpture garden.

Just to the west of the cultural center would be the town park. At the south end would be a museum. At the north end would be a multi-denominational chapel.

To the east of the town lake would be service flats for the elderly and disabled. Next to this would be a small forest with pathways. An open air theater would be located just next to the lake. The west side of the lake would have some weekender cottages and a spa-hotel. This would be next to the indoor-outdoor swimming pool of the sports complex.

The residential districts of the community would be to the east and west of Pravikense Prospekt. Most of the housing would be rowhouses, small apartment buildings, and a small number of free standing single housing units. There would be one apartment tower with views over the whole town.

There would be workshop districts for the Alpha Co-ops, as well as garden plots and greenhouses. The entire community would be landscaped with many trees, parks, and gardens.

Since the Alpha village would be an interim community, the buildings would be constructed of inexpensive brick, wood, and concrete. The goal would be to move the entire town to the lesenum once it would be established, to serve as an open-air museum of the history of Project Alphistia.

The Alpha village would have a permanent population of at least 300, with perhaps more, as high as 500, or even up to nearly a thousand, depending on how many members of the Project would have the desire and ability to live together. There would be accommodations for several hundred visitors, students, weekenders, etc, so that more than a thousand people might be at the community on a busy day.

The social amenities, cultural facilities, and quality of life would be very high for a community of this small size. This would make the ideas of Project Alphistia attractive, and serve as an example of the life to come in the lesenum.

Guide

(Numbers refer to the map of the Alpha Village provided with this booklet.)

Welcome Center(1)

The Welcome Center would be the terminus for the short rail line from the parking area. It would be an airy building with large windows front and back. On one side would be an information center about Project Alphistia and the Alpha village. On the other side would be washrooms, storage lockers, and a refreshment stand. In the central hall would be a scale model of all the buildings in Alpha village.

Hotel Alpha(2)

This would be the main hotel for Alpha village, just to the west of the Welcome Center. There would be 30-50 rooms, a restaurant, bar, and cafe with outdoor seating. There would also be a sunterrace and garden terrace.

Alpha Bank(3)

Opposite the Welcome Center on the west side of Pravikense Prospekt would be the bank for Alpha village and Project Alphistia. Visitors could exchange their own currency for smart cards or paper vouchers denominated in alphen/alphas, the currency that would be used in the lesenum.

Alpha Co-Ops Center(4)

This would be a three story building running the length of the west side of Pravikense Prospekt. The ground floor would have a number of stores selling goods made by the co-ops, including a clothing store, beauty products store, crafts shop, amongst others. There would also be a video and cd shop. Above the shops would be offices and some of the workshops of the co-op.

cinema(5)

The cinema would show several films about Alpha village and Project Alphistia, with evening and weekend screenings of films from around the world for residents of the community. A distinctive mural would be on the cinema's facade.

A PROTOTYPE COMMUNITY FOR PROJECT ALPHISTIA

30

- 1 Station
Welcome Center
- 2 hotel
- 3 bank
- 4 Co-Op Center
- 5 Cinema
- 6 Ko-Op
- 7 Weekender flats
- 8 apartments
- 9 Alpha House
- 10 Alpha Institute
- 11 Aula
- 12 hotel
- 13 post office
- 14 Open-Air theater
- 15 Clinic



- 16 service flats
- 17 spa
- 18 sports center
- 19 library
- 20 theater
- 21 school
- 22 hostel
- 23 museum
- 24 chapel
- 25 formal gardens
- 26 camping
- 27 workshops
- 28 Artel workshops
- 29 physical plant
- 30 car park, entry

ALPHA VILLAGE

Ko-Op(6)

This would be the department store and supermarket for the Alpha village. On the roof would be a cafeteria with some outdoor seating. Most of the stores goods would be imported, since a full-line of products for the resident population couldn't be made by the local co-ops.

shops and flats(7-8)

The east side of Pravikense Prospekt would have two buildings just to the north and to the south of the cinema, with more stores on the ground floor, and flats above. There would be "domus", a co-op furniture stores, a bookstore, gallery, souvenir shop, and posters store. There would be an ice cream cafe just opposite the Welcome Center. The flats above would contain weekender flats. These would be apartments for members of Project Alphistia who couldn't live in the community permanently, but wanted a homelike place to stay for weekend or summer visits.

Alpha Center(9)

The headquarters for Project Alphistia. This building would be modeled on the Hilversum town hall in the Netherlands. The local community council, called the Kilrete, would meet in the building. The administrative offices of Project Alphistia would also be located here. The main entry hall would have nine large murals, representing each of the nine provinces in the future lesenum.

Alpha Institute(10)

This would be located on the west side of Alpha Square/Alpha Plan. This would be a research center for Project Alphistia. The institute would develop plans for the lesenum, publish materials about the project, and promote the development of the Alphistian language. The institute's building would have two parts: a low rise building with conference rooms, a media center, and a publishing center. The other section of the building would be a tower block of offices.

Aula(11)

The Aula would be on the south side of Alpha Square. It would be a large meeting hall, with mostly glass walls between wooden beams, supporting the three gabled roof. There would be a beautiful view of the town lake through the back windows of the hall. The Aula would host large meetings and gatherings, holding up to 500 people.

chapel(24)

The north end of the park would have a nondenominational chapel used for services by the various religious groups in the Alpha village. Projects Alphistia and the future lesenum would be secular, and religious belief would be a personal matter.

formal garden(25)

A formal garden would be planted just to the north of the town park. It would have memorials to members of the project who have died, and in the center of the garden would be a monument called *The Alphistian Idea*.

campsite(26)

North of the Welcome Center would be a camping ground for visitors. There would be cabins, tentsites, and a parking area for trailers.

workshops(27-28)

There would be two main workshop areas, separate from residential districts, but easily accessible to them. The Alpha Co-ops would have its workshops here, but resident artists, craftsmen, and small business owners could also have their own workspaces.

physical plant(29)

The electrical generator, water towers, and other infrastructural facilities would be together in this complex on the west side of the town.

parking(30)

Non-electric vehicles would park in the lot next to the station for the short train ride to the Welcome Center. Electric taxis and vans would move people and goods around the community, although most people could easily walk from one place to another.

Project Alphistia Questions and Answers

What is Alphistia?

Alphistia is a model-nation project, also known as a "virtual country". It began as a "neighborhood nation" created by Anthony Skaggs as a nine-year-old boy in 1967, in a town near Cincinnati, Ohio. Various houses on a working-class street were designated "provinces", and local children joined up as "citizens". A proto-Alphistian language was created, complete with its own alphabet. This childrens' passtime continued until 1974, when the first "real, existing" Alphistia ended. For the next 20 or so years, Alphistia existed on paper in various incarnations. In 1995, a booklet was completed which described Alphistia as a real country in the not-too-distant future. Efforts were begun to share information about Alphistia with others.

What is "Project Alphistia"?

Project Alphistia was set up to promote Alphistia and provide information about this model country. The organization also explores the possible establishing of a prototype community, as well as the creation of a future Alphistian national homeland. Currently, work is focused on publications about the "Alphistian Idea".

Where would Alphistia be located?

Alphistia as a model nation exists only on paper and as a virtual country on the net. The possibilities for a future territorial Alphistia are speculation, but there are several options. A territorial Alphistia would most likely be located outside the borders of the USA. The preferred location would be on undeveloped and thinly populated land without climate extremes, suitable for farming and the development of several dozen small towns and cities, which would support small industries and crafts. A comprehensive network of electrified railways would connect the settlements to each other. Villages would be linked to the railway stations by electric buslines. A large part of the territory would be left in its natural state. Alphistia would be self governing and have its own economic system and social policies. It would negotiate political autonomy with the state granting land, either under a form of home rule or an agreed-to independence. A territorial Alphistia would only be established by peaceful means.

How would Alphistia be established?

The creation of a territorial Alphistia would of necessity be a long term goal and a difficult one to accomplish. The example of the creation of the modern state of Israel might serve as a model, although without displacement of local populations or the use of force. Project Alphistia would co-ordinate the development of Alphistia beyond its status as a model nation. In the short term, the goals of the project would be further defined. The vocabulary of the Alphistian language would be increased and a literature developed. The Project would also continue its town planning work, research on the political and economic structure of Alphistia, as well as specific aspects of the Alphistian social system. The long-term goal of Project Alphistia is to obtain suitable territory for a self-governing community. In the Alphistian language, this is called "Lesenum." Prior to the creation of the Lesenum, the project could establish one or more interim communities. These would be self-governing but would still be integrated within the larger state of which they would be a part. The first prototype community would be the Alpha Village, a settlement of up to 500 people.

What sort of political system would Alphistia have?

Alphistia would be a republic with a democratically elected parliament (called the Kilrete), and a prime minister-president (called the Spor). The Spor would appoint a cabinet from elected Kilrete members. Elections would use a system of proportional representation to ensure a diversity of opinion. There would be local councils at the provincial and town level. The legal system would be based on the national constitution and a legal code. It would be non-adversarial and there would be no jury trials. There would be a national court of appeals, which would not make politicized interpretations of the Constitution. Alphistia's political system would differ from the US and other countries with Anglo-Saxon traditions. It would be more like the northern European systems in Scandinavia or the Netherlands.

How would the Alphistian economy be organized?

Alphistia would have a "social market" economy. It would resemble Germany's economic system: a partnership between economic, government and union interests, as opposed to the extreme laissez-faire system of the US. There would be comprehensive social welfare benefits similar to programs in Scandinavian countries or the Netherlands. Co-operatives modeled on the profit-making co-ops of the Mondragon organizations in the Basque region of Spain would play an

important role in the national economy. All workers would be free to join trade unions. There would be worker representatives on company management councils and the co-ops would elect their own management. All workers would receive a standard benefits package which would include guaranteed paid vacations, holidays, sick leave, pensions, family leave etc. Universal access to health care would be provided by the Alphistian Health Service and would not be provided only to those with jobs.

What would be the basic characteristics of Alphistian society?

Just as the US has a national ideology known as the "American Way of Life", Alphistia would have its own political and social norms. Alphistians would have the same political freedoms as other Western industrialized countries: to organize politically and express opinions, travel abroad or emigrate, be religious, be creative artistically. However, the dominant culture would be more egalitarian, less aggressive, and more humane than the increasingly rightwing US. Its model would be the social-democratic, "Third Way" systems of northern Europe. Alphistia would be a society with people from many backgrounds and cultures, and official policy would be to promote tolerance for peoples' racial and cultural diversity, sexual orientation religious beliefs, etc. There would be a focus on green issues, the development of a non-car dependent culture, building of livable small-sized urban towns, and providing all Alphistians with the opportunity to balance their worklives with adequate leisure time for hobbies, education, and cultural activities.

What is the Alphistian language?

Alphistian was first invented by Anthony Skaggs as a child. It had its own alphabet, grammar, and a vocabulary of several hundred words. Alphistian now uses the Latin alphabet, has a regular and simple grammar, and a vocabulary of about 1500 words. The vocabulary will continue to be developed until all the necessary words for everyday use exist. New words will then be added through everyday usage, or through proposals made by a language committee.

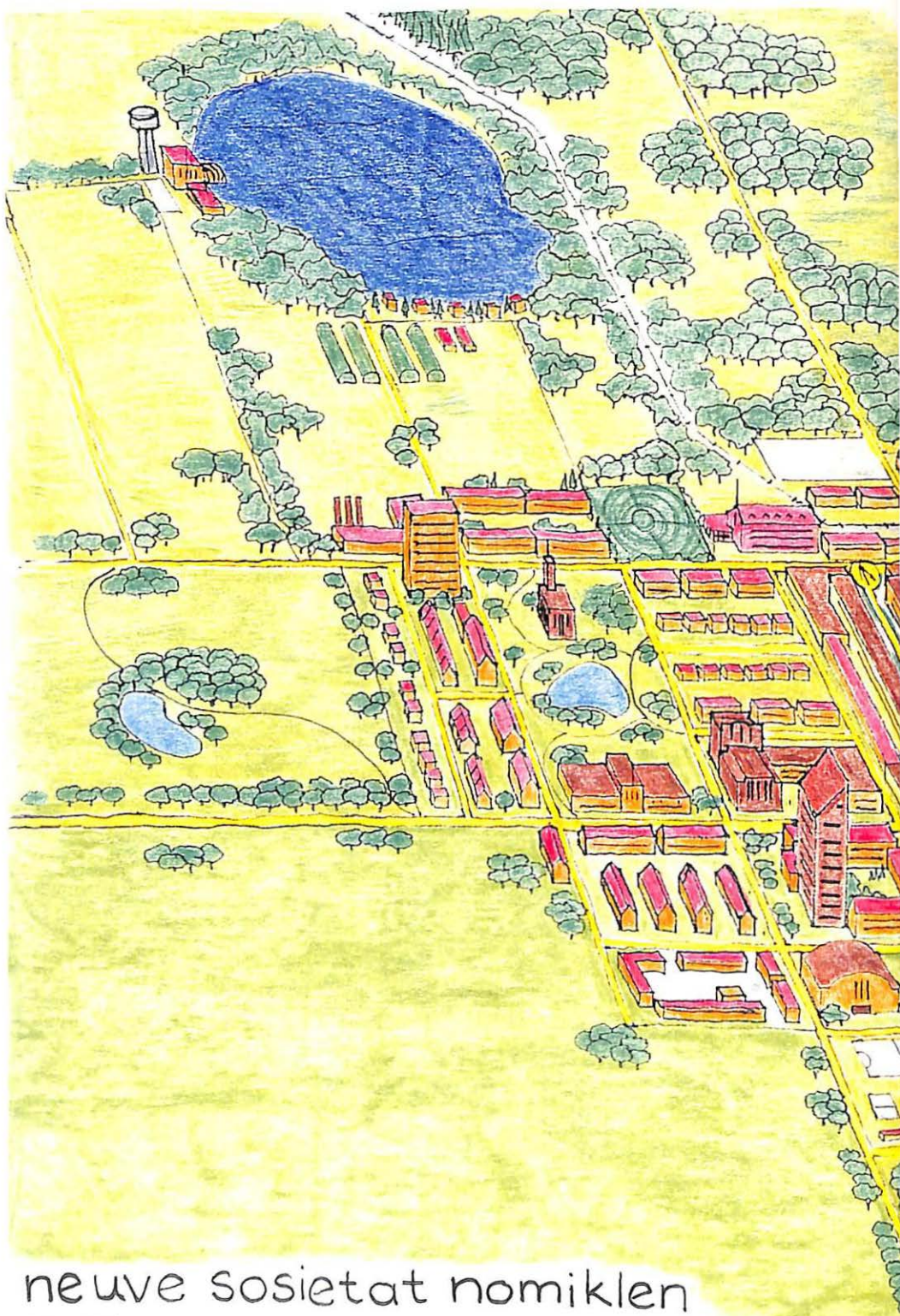
The Alphistian language is at the core of the "Alphistian Idea". A national language other than English would greatly aid the development of a unique cultural life, like small countries such as Iceland or Israel. English would still be important for Alphistians to know as a second language, since it is the international language of the world's educated population.

What is the Skansatala?

The Skansatala is the Alphistian national epic, like the Kalevala of Finland or the sagas of Iceland. Currently it exists only in outline form, describing a mythical Alphistia during a golden age in the distant past.

What else is important to know about Alphistia?

Project Alphistia is just beginning. So far it has been only a personal project for Anthony Skaggs. To learn more about Alphistia send email to: alphistia@hotmail.com. A website is available at: www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/2418



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